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9 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR GENERAL TAYLOR

Attached is an excerpt of the transcript of a CIA briefing of the House Armed Services Subcommittee on 10 March 1961. This gives the comments made on the Cuban operation.

Allen W. Dulles
Director

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EXCERPTS FROM VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT OF BRIEFING OF
CIA SUBCOMMITTEE OF HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

Friday, 10 March 1961, 10:10 a.m.

Room 314, Old House Office Building

Present

Members of House Armed Services Committee

Paul J. Kilday (D., Texas), Chairman

Charles E. Bennett (D., Florida)

George Huddleston, Jr. (D., Alabama)

Melvin Price (D., Illinois)

James E. Van Zandt (R., Pennsylvania)

Bob Wilson (R., California)

Frank G. Osmers, Jr. (R., New Jersey)

Leslie C. Arends (R., Illinois), ex officio member

Robert Smart, Chief Counsel

Central Intelligence Agency

Allen W. Dulles, Director

General C. P. Cabell, USAF, Deputy Director

Robert Amory, Jr.

Richard Helms

John S. Warner

I. M. Peterson, Recording Secretary

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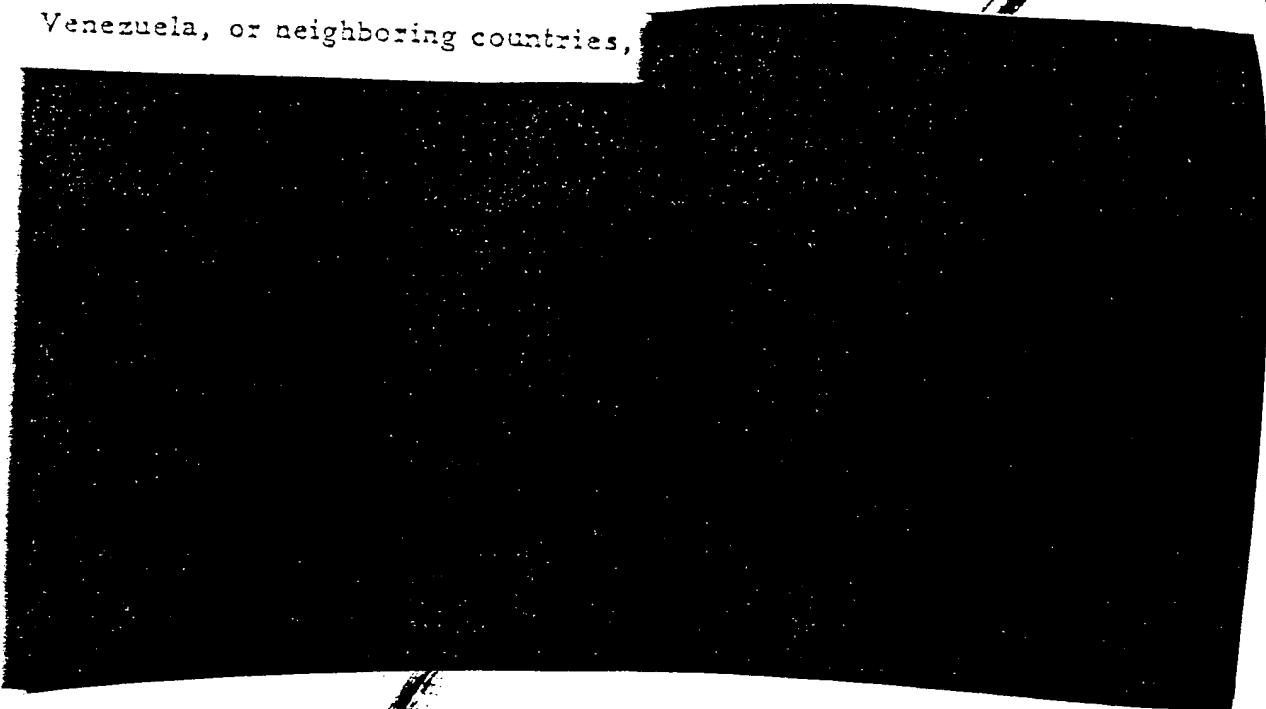
MR. DULLES: On operations -- Cuba, first of all. This also is very classified, although obviously a certain amount of it has gotten to the press, but not its attribution. Beginning just about a year ago now the decision was made in the high political level that Cuba had passed the point of no return, that it was a Communist-dominated society, that there was no reason to believe that they were going to change, that their stock in trade was hatred of and attempt to degrade the United States in every possible way, and that the objectives of Cuba were far beyond the confines of Cuba itself, that they were trying to expand their Communist revolution to neighboring countries, particularly in the Caribbean area, and therefore we were asked to start to develop, working covertly, a force in being of Cubans and a political organization of Cubans and a propaganda attack on Communism in Cuba -- really a three-pronged attack: one was military, one was the political, and the third was the propaganda.

To start with the last first, we developed the radio equipment on Swan Island, which you have heard a great deal about. That has been going on now for about six months and is, we think, very effective. That reaches practically all of Cuba. And we are working on the program very carefully with the Cubans, and we have the very best Cuban refugees working on that program. ~~_____~~

~~_____~~ and we have quite a barrage of broadcasts to Cuba now, attacking

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the Communist regime. We have also availed ourselves of the fact that most of the able Cuban writers have come either to this country or Venezuela, or neighboring countries, 

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We have been working very hard to try to bring the Cuban leaders together in some sort of organization. We have organized what we call The Frente under Verona. During the last few weeks we have been enlarging the base of that and we hope to have together - hopefully, this week - have together a stronger group more representative of all the Cuban resistance parties. It's terribly difficult to get these people together. There are over 100 separate, different Cuban groups, all of which aspire to leadership. There are at least 100 people that think they ought to be the next President of Cuba. We have been expending a certain amount of funds in this operation, and we really feel now there is some ground for hope.

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This has been followed very closely in the papers. The Baltimore Sun has had some pretty good stories about this. You can't keep it out of the press. We do not appear openly in this. We are working under pseudonyms, etc., so that is not attributed to the United States, although they must suspect the funds come from some official or officially controlled sources.

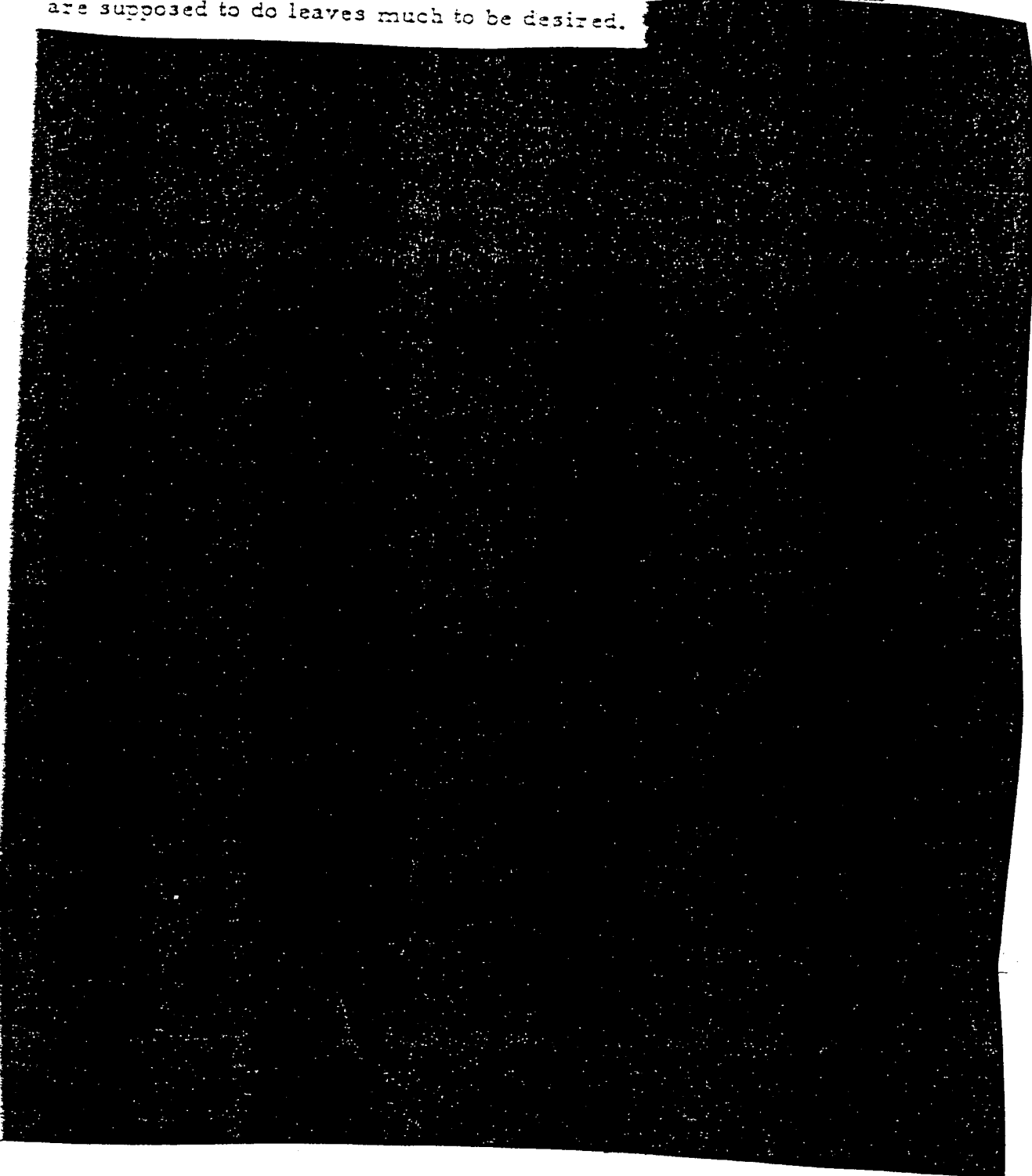
Now the third facet, and probably the most important of all, is the preparation of a Cuban force, and I will ask General Cabell, who has been working very particularly on that, to describe that.

GENERAL CABELL: Mr. Chairman, that involves all three elements, ground, naval, and air, because we have to have those capabilities. Essentially the size of our ground force is roughly in the neighborhood of a thousand Cubans, already recruited, organized, and in training in Guatemala in a base there. And they have by this time attained a very high degree of proficiency, under Latin standards, and our judgment is that it's probably the best force to ever develop in Latin America as far as its firepower and its maneuverability and all is concerned. In connection with that we have developed an Air Force. It too is based in Guatemala and under training -- recruited from Cuban pilots, both commercial and military crews. As far as flying aircraft is concerned they are at a fairly high degree of training, but we run into, particularly there, the normal Latin characteristics of lack of precision and determination and all, and their ability to get through on a given mission and to do the things that they

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are supposed to do leaves much to be desired.



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We have the necessary seacraft assembled to transport the ground force to Cuba if, as, and when we get the order to proceed with such an operation.

At the present time this is all, [REDACTED]

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Q. MR. OSMERS: Mr. Chairman, is a significant role in our activities being played by the Church in Cuba, or not?

MR. DULLES: Yes, the Church has taken a very stout attitude, and it has been very helpful. They have been rudely repressed by the government. They are in a very difficult position. It's a question as to how far the influence of the Church goes down to the rank and file of the people. It's very influential in the middle ranks of the people and a great many of those are anti-Castro. Our problem is what the great rank and file of the people feel. We are very disturbed at the general trends, in that they have developed a very large militia - about 200 thousand in Cuba. We think that most of that militia as a fighting force is negligible but that they are building up a hard core - 30 to 40 thousand in that Militia which probably has pretty good fighting qualities.

Q. MR. OSMERS: What is the food situation there, Mr. Dulles -- of the average man?

MR. DULLES: The average man isn't suffering yet. Food comes cheap and easy in Cuba. They are getting in the sugar crop, not as well as usual but it's not going to be a catastrophe. They are not going to get anything

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like the money out of their sugar crop, because they are not selling it to us at a high price. They will have to sell at world prices and they may have some difficulty in disposing of it, although the Soviet Bloc is taking a very large part of the crop. Now how much cash they're going to give them -- because they have given them a tremendous amount of arms -- thousands of tons of arms have gone into Cuba by ship, and we believe they have all the small arms and trucks and small tanks, and so forth - and some larger tanks - that type of thing - that they need. We don't rate very highly their ability to use it, but we are afraid as time goes on the Communist hold will get stronger and stronger. And the question that General Cabell raised - it's a very difficult question, and that is purely a political question and beyond us. We have tried to carry out our particular side of the mandate we were given, but recognize the extreme difficulty in effect on Latin America, etc., but we feel at the present time the resistance inside Cuba is not strong enough of itself to rise up against this militia force that they have created, and that if there is any hope of having it rise it will have to be sparked. In some way or other you have to light the fuse and do it fairly dramatically. Then that involves the possible use of these forces.

Q. MR. KILDAY: What portion of the militia is armed?

MR. DULLES: Well, they could have armed practically all of it in some way or other with the arms they have from the Soviet Union.

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Q. MR. KILDAY: Are the arms in the hands of the militia?

MR. DULLES: Very largely, yes.

Q. MR. KILDAY: With ammunition?

MR. DULLES: Yes.

Q. MR. KILDAY: The militia actually have their arms?

MR. DULLES: In most cases, according to our information. Now whether the whole 200 thousand do or not, I don't know.

GENERAL CABELL: When they have occasion to deploy the militia then they issue the ammunition. For example, they have been concerned with dissident movements in the Escambray Mountain areas. They have assembled a large militia force, and those have been armed complete with ammunition. But in the normal training they don't necessarily turn over the ammunition.

Q. MR. KILDAY: But they do have the guns - the arms?

GENERAL CABELL: Yes.

Q. MR. SMART: What is the rationale about the size of the force in Guatemala under training? A thousand troops against the size of the Cuban Army plus the militia -- is it considered to be adequate? or is that all we can get? or what is the rationale back of that?

GENERAL CABELL: It's a combination of a size that you can really retain any semblance of non-attributability. We could recruit more Cubans but we would have to lower the standards as to what we consider to be the individual reliability of those men, and motivation. The thousand that we

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have have been well screened, and we believe that their motivations are relatively high, and that they are a relatively high class of Cubans involved. These are not just street bums.

Q. MR. SMART: Is it considered they would form the nucleus of the leadership?

GENERAL CABELL: Both leadership, but in particular they would form the nucleus, for example, of an amphibious operation in seizing a portion of Cuban real estate, and that enclave then would be used - the existence of it, the knowledge of it, and the presence of it would be a rallying point both visible to Cubans to spark resistance in other parts of the island, because they would have this example in front of them, and an actual, physical enclave people could join.

Q. MR. OSMERS: Do you feel that a force of one thousand, however well trained, would be able to hold -- considering normal attrition, would they be able to hold a sizeable enough piece of Cuban real estate to permit that? I admit a thousand is a thousand times better than none --

GENERAL CABELL: Our judgment is affirmative on that.

MR. WILSON: Castro started with 32.

MR. DULLES: We have had a very careful assessment of this secretly by high military authority in this country -- we had their help, because we don't consider ourselves competent military authority in the United States, so we have sought the very highest and effective support of that kind.

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